

RESPONSE TO HURRICANE HARVEY

Each of these natural disasters presented unique challenges. Hurricane Harvey hit Corpus Christi Texas as a category 4 hurricane, then lingered over the Texas gulf coast dropping more than 50 inches of rain, in Harris County, according to the NWS, and affected over 7 million people. EPA worked with Texas and local officials to assess more than 2,200 drinking water systems and more than 1,700 waste water systems; retrieved over 950 loose containers and, according to FEMA, safely disposed over 20 million cubic yards of debris. At one point, Texas had approximately 500 people and EPA had over 250 people assisting in response to this natural disaster.

Unique EPA contributions included aerial screening by the Airborne Spectral Photometric Environmental Collection Technology (ASPECT) aircraft that provided responders with critical information on chemical fires and pollution releases. EPA deployed 2 Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzer (TAGA) mobile air pollution detection vehicles that provided communities near petrochemical plants with daily information about air quality. EPA also deployed the Portable High-Throughput Integrated Laboratory Identification System (PHILIS) mobile laboratory which provided responders with 48-hour turnaround laboratory analysis. Finally, EPA secured, inspected, and obtained confirmatory samples from 43 Superfund sites to document flooding impacts.